A

MASONIC EULOGY,

ON THE LIFE

OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS

Brother George Washington,

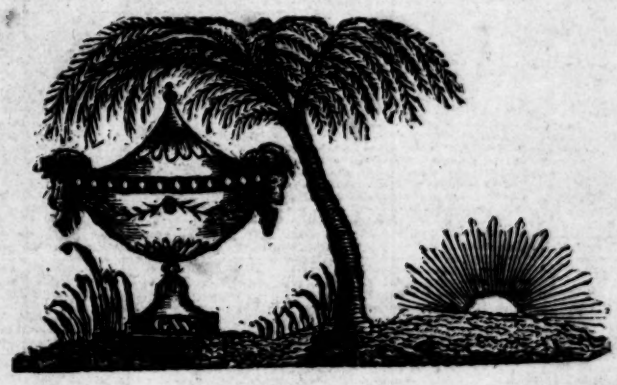
PRONOUNCED

BEFORE THE *BRETHREN* OF ST. JOHN'S LODGE,
ON THE EVENING OF THE 4th FEB. 5800.

At their particular Request.

BY BROTHER George Blake.

" Description cannot suit itself in words.
" To demonstrate the life of such a man."——*Shakspere.*



BOSTON,
PRINTED BY BROTHER *JOHN RUSSELL.*
5800.

BRITISH MUSEUM

St. John's Lodge, Concert-Hall,
Feb. 4, 5800.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY,

THAT the Most Worshipful SAMUEL DUNN, *Right Worshipful* THOMAS DENNIE, *and Right Worshipful* SAMUEL PARKMAN, *Esq'rs, be requested, in committee, to wait on brother GEORGE BLAKE, Esq. thank him for the classical, pathetic, and truly masonic Eulogy, by him in Lodge pronounced on the sublime virtues and perfect character of their deceased patron, ornament, and enlightened Brother* GEORGE WASHINGTON, *and request a copy for the press.*

A true copy of Record,

WILLIAM ALLINE, Sec'y.

TO the charity of my Brothers, which will forgive the errors, and supply the defects of a very hasty and inaccurate performance, the Eulogy requested is humbly submitted, by their most obedient, and very affectionate Brother,

GEORGE BLAKE.

Franklin-Place, Boston.
Feb. 5. 5800.

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EULOGY.

LABOUR, be at rest! *Mirth* let not thy voice be heard! *Joy*, our once sweet visitant, we have now no place for thee here! our Lodge has become the abode of melancholy and sorrow:—*Grief, oh, Grief!* most sincerely do we welcome thee to the hall of this fraternity; thou dull dismal messenger of woe, it is thy privilege to rule our Lodge this night; from heaven's high arch art thou commissioned, by the weeping genius of *Masonry*, to take the charge of this her terrestrial habitation.—We acknowledge thy credentials—they are attested by the signature of Death—we bow to thy authority—we yield to thy commands.—Come, then, *Grief!* dark and gloomy Spirit; we are now thy Brothers. At this moment we are ready to induct thee to office—to invest thee with

the black symbols of stately promotion. In the *East*, where gay light once had dominion, there shalt thou sit enthroned on clouds and darkness :—In the *West* thy faithful *Wardens* are Sadness and Sympathy; and as the sun sitteth in the *West*, to close the day, so do they sit there to draw thy cloudy mantle over this Lodge. Dressed in thy most dismal attire, we hail thee, *Grief*, as the master of this meeting;—for thy *Truncheon*, we give thee the Grave-man's *Mattock* :—on thy bosom will we fasten a beamless *Jewel* that is covered by the sable vestment of night;—for thy *Girdle*, thou shalt wear a *wandering moon beam*, whose glimmering light, shall serve to make more visible the darkness of thy form.—The *Tomb-Stone* is thy *Trussell Board*, and thy *Tow Line* shall be twisted from the finest chords of *Mason's hearts*.—Here then, *Grief*, we await thy commands; our *hearts*, and not our hands, will perform the joyless labours of the night. Our refreshment shall be the cup of bitterness, and when we have drunken it to the dregs our bosoms, with *three times three thousand* pulsations, shall give the signal of our sincerity and unison.

BUT whence my Brothers and wherefore is all this gloom and stillness? Why is the noise of the busy hammer suspended, and our ears greeted only by the slow beatings of kindred bosoms. Why has our noon tide *Sun* retired so soon to the dark chambers of the *West?* Our Lodge, which has so often resounded with the voice of industry and mirth, is now silent as the mansion of death;—those dazzling luminaries, which have been wont to enlighten our labours, why are they extinguished;—why do they now refuse their accustomed radiance? The *Compass*, the *Square*, the *Level*, the *Plumb*, and all those sparkling *Jewels*, once the pride and the ornament of *Masons*, are now concealed by a veil of blackness; the cheerful song, which has so often welcomed the eve of labour, has ceased to undulate—I hear nothing but the doleful melody of sighs and groans—where I have once seen the sprightly features of ease and contentment—where I have often beheld the expanded countenance of gladness and hilarity—through this dubious quivering light, I can now discern naught but the pale sickly visage of melancholy and sorrow. Need I ask, my Brothers, whence this awful change? Of our respected *Master* shall I inquire, why stands a tear trembling in his eye,

or of you, my friends, why every breath seems to travel from the lungs in pain; or why this dismal night shade is more suited to the present "*habit of your souls*," than the jocund aspect of day?—No! my own heart, my Brothers, resolves the mystery——— WASHINGTOM! OH WASHINGTON! OUR MASTER, OUR BROTHER, OUR FATHER, OUR FRIEND, WASHINGTON IS NO MORE!—He, who was greater than *Hiram*, better and more beloved than *Solomon*, he whose virtues have been so long the example, the boast of our fraternity; whose countenance diffused splendour and brightness through the wide *arch* of *Masonry*, has gone down in the *West*, has descended to the silent mansions of the dead. That perfect *Ashler* which stood at the East corner of our *Temple*, that *Stone* which the Builders selected, which was wrought and polished by the hand of GOD himself, that on which rested the main pillar of our *Fabric* is torn away and removed by the resistless arm of *Death*; the strength of our building is decayed; its beauty and ornament are obliterated forever; the *Grand Architect* in heaven has recalled from his embassy, a being, who was sent to us, as a *light* to our designs, a *model* for our labours. *Pure Spirit of Masonry!* thy loss is irrepara-

ble. Well mayest thou now make the "dust thy paper and with rainy tears write sorrow on the bosom of the earth."—The fairest *column* of thy earthly *temple* is broken, the *column* on which the brightest features of thy character were engraven, is demolished, and in the *quarries* of heaven alone is there a precious stone to supply its place.

THINK not, my Brothers, that I have felt it my duty, on the present occasion, to assist you in estimating the magnitude of your loss, by an attempt to display all the virtues of the wonderful man, whose death we commemorate. Forgive me, if I touch lightly on a few lineaments of a character, whose aggregate is not only far beyond my powers to describe; but as far beyond my faculties to comprehend. A few days only have elapsed since I was first invited by my brethren to assist in this solemn offering of grief. In this busy, thoughtless, tumultuous world, I leave you to consider, what a small, very small portion of our reflection is fit to be dedicated to a subject so interesting, so sublimely affecting.—For myself, I can hardly contemplate the death of WASHINGTON without a feeling of piety and devotion; I dared not think of the event, until I had purified my

mind from every sentiment relating to the stale concerns of ordinary life; and to speak of him, in this solemn Lodge, I should consider as nearly allied to blasphemy, had I not first cleansed my tongue from all the frivolous language to which it is accustomed.

WITH these impressions on my mind, few indeed must have been the moments I have had to prepare for this solemnity; but I complain not of their brevity, for *Time* himself could not lend me hours enough to complete the task—Had every minute of my leisure been protracted to months—had every month been prolonged to years, still should I have been but at the beginning of a duty, so stupendous as that of recording the virtues of our illustrious deceased. Were the flight of my fancy swift as a sun-beam; were the vision of my mind sharp as lightning in the "collied night," yet would they be slow in their progress, still must they loiter in the rear of his glory and renown. What then, my Brothers, can be expected of me, dull and feeble as I am; what can I say to magnify the Eulogium he deserved; to swell the tide of grief, that is now bursting from the eyes of his faithful affectionate and grateful countrymen. Compared to his virtues, and the

world's sorrow for his death, all the little praise in my power to bestow, is but as the transient night fly's twinkle to the steady lustre of the pole star—my voice as a sigh to the whirlwind—and our united sympathy but as a single tear drop on the billows of ocean.

WERE we contemplating the character of other heroes and statesmen, whom history hath celebrated, well indeed might it be suspected that hypocrisy had put on for a while the vizard of grief, that cold senseless duty has been blowing its studied praises thro' the trump of hollow adulation; but on a theme like the present, language loses the power to exaggerate, and even dissimulation itself could hardly conjure up a pretence, that would reach in semblance to the height of reality. Th character of WASHINGTON stood single anc alone. In him all the qualities which constitute the excellence of man, however contrary in nature or repugnant in principle, were almost miraculously united and reconciled;—with the ardor of his youth, was associated the temperance of age; imagination was instructed by prudence, without being trammelled by timidity; caution guided the steps of rashness, but fear did not retard the celerity of courage.

HIS first achievement in war, was but the experiment of youth, and yet on the field of *Braddock*, his success seemed to have resulted alone, from the ripened experience of manhood. He was then little more than a beardless stripling, the leader of an undisciplined militia, "disdainfully thrown in the rear" of a veteran soldiery; but on that memorable day, when victory had already pronounced a decision on the conflict, when death, furious and inclement, had reached to the very middle of his ranks, and with hideous yell, was in swift pursuit of a disordered and affrighted army, there did we behold our youthful hero, with calmness and serenity on his front, collected in the midst of carnage, and undismayed by the horrors that surrounded him. Awed by his presence, destiny forgot its resolves, and even death himself, as if outgeneralled by his management, abandoned in despair his half completed purpose of desolation.

BUT the presages of his youth, bold and promising as they were, have been more than consummated. At an early period of life, the great properties of his mind were too resplendent to need an interpretation from scrutiny, and their tendency, too perspicuous

to require an assurance from the tongue of prophecy.

OUR country was menaced by oppression! *Bellona's* scourge had already been tinged with the blood of our countrymen; our shores were shadowed by the floating messengers of destruction, and the very air we breathe thickened by the smoak of our conflagrated villages; when the voice of millions, almost at the same moment, with a kind of instinctive confidence, appealed for protection to the heroism of a WASHINGTON. At this perilous crisis, the heart of every American, like the trembling needle at the pole, rested on him as the last point of its dependence. Influenced by no other excitement than the purest love of his country, aided by few other resources, than the exhaustless arsenal of his own great mind, at a time when bravery might have faltered, and despair itself been disarmed of its resolution, did he become the bold decided champion of American liberty.

WITH what unshaken firmness, with what unerring fidelity, he executed the fearfull duties of his station it is thy business, *History!* to pronounce to future generations; thy

work is already begun, and when the story is complete, it will be the largest, and the most instructive volume in thy Archives. In vain may thy *Plutarch* and *Polibius* vaunt their *Alexanders* their *Hannibals*, the *Scipios* and *Cæsars*, all their boasted virtues would but serve as an appendix to the biography of *our* WASHINGTON. Faithful *Clio*, thou who presidest in the registry of human transactions, thy book and thy trumpet, which have been wont to report the deeds of *heroic murderers*, are now required for a new and more grateful employment; before thou writest the name of WASHINGTON, well mayest thou tear from thy records, the pages on which are inscribed the inevitable follies and crimes of mankind—well mayest thou now exult, there has once lived a man, who had power without ambition, glory without arrogance, fame without infatuation; a man who united the meekness of a christian, with the influence of a despot; a man whose heart did not sink by misfortune, and whose head became more steady by elevation; a man who saved a country by his valour, and could receive its praises without assumption.

IT was, my Brothers, the sentiment of a very profound writer, "that all human ad-

vantages confer more power of doing evil than good." To this opinion, founded on the degeneracy of our nature, common experience had given almost the authority of maxim; but the degrading principle, like almost every other, deduced from the frailty, the imbecility of man, was precisely reversed in the character of WASHINGTON. All his advantages, all his powers, extensive as they were, and in other hands, destructive as they might have been, by a kind of supernatural agency, seemed to have been directed to but one and the best of purposes, the welfare of his country and the glory of his God.

THERE was a time, when, had the ambition of a *Sylla*, been united to the power of a WASHINGTON, this fair country, which we inhabit; this favored residence of liberty and peace, might perhaps have been prostrate at the foot of an imperious tyrant. Instead of greeting our illustrious Brother in the streets, with love and the familiarity of his equals, we might have commixed with an obsequious rabble, and followed in the rear of a conqueror in triumph; instead of weeping at his grave in all the sincerity of grief, we might now have been engaged in a mimick solemnity, a cold unfeeling slavish

ceremonial. Was there not a time, my Brothers, when he might perhaps have decimated our councils, like a *Cromwell*, garbled our parliament, and trampled with impunity, on the freedom he was commissioned and affected to protect? When with a devoted, unsatisfied army at command, he could have spoken to us in the name of liberty, and his vacant pretensions, been received as the only pledge of our rights?

BUT praises be to heaven, our WASHINGTON was incorruptible by the possession of glory, as he had been magnanimous in pursuit of his nation's independence; his exalted soul would have disdained to command, when duty and honor enjoined him to obey; his valor which had done every thing for others, had nothing to perform for the aggrandizement of himself. America Victorious, her freedom secured, the commanding attitude of a General, the renowned conquering General, was in an instant converted to the humble demeanor of an obedient, unaspiring citizen. At the altar of liberty, when he presented the charter of independence, he also laid down the sword, by which it had been rescued. By this last

act, the vaunting predictions of his enemies were, in a moment, blasted, and the fondest hopes of his countrymen confirmed. He who had conquered the proudest nation of Europe, by a nobler achievement, had now "conquered himself," had vanquished the frailties and infirmities of nature.

FROM that period, nothing remained of the soldier, the veteran, but the fruits of his victory, and our imperishable remembrance of the valor by which they were acquired. For himself, solitude and retirement were the only recompense he could ask for his services; but even this recompense, little as it seemed, was greater than his country had power to bestow. Again was he wanted; his nation called—he could not refrain to listen and obey.—He who had been first in the field, was now required to be first in the councils of his country. In this elevated department; if any thing could surpass the rectitude of his conduct, it was the facility and moderation with which he afterwards resigned the authority of his office. Power, that delusive phantasm, which bewilders little minds, had no charm for him; but when duty required its exercise for the happiness

of mankind—at a time, when the very name of WASHINGTON had in it the force of magic, when like a secret talisman, it could harmonize the discord of passions, most hostile, and reconcile the variance of principles the most opposite, at a time when the dissonant voices of conflicting party would have melted into unison to proclaim him again the leader of our Republic; at that very time, when like *Augustus*, he could perhaps have managed his fame, to perpetuate his authority, did we behold the venerable *President*, as we had before seen the victorious *General*, descending with complacence to the humble occupation of an husbandman.

HIS labors completed, how much more than his duties performed, our illustrious hero was once more permitted to enjoy in retirement the luxury of his reflections. Retirement he might have, but in the dreariest wilds of our continent, there is not a covert, most hidden and inscrutable, that could hold a being like him, a moment in obscurity;—Glory, like the pillar and the cloud, marked his progress by night and by day. As well might the sun conceal his disk behind the vapor of a dew drop—as well might the

flaming meteor travel unnoticed through the dark welkin of night, as thou, Oh WASHINGTON! couldst have lived in thy country, unaccompanied by its regard and astonishment. In thy own family, at the head of thy domestics, thou wert not less conspicuous than when leading to victory in the van of thy armies. In the view of Americans thou wert the same illustrious being, whether they beheld you presiding in their councils, or an unassuming umpire in a village disputation;—in thy hands, the meanest implement of a farmer was more graceful and imposing than the sceptre of a monarch;—and in the loneliest vale of thy farm, thou wert as high and elevated as if perched on the summit of towering Alleghany;—the lustre of thy character was intrinsic, unchangeable, it could neither be increased by accident, nor diminished by the casualties of station.

BUT in his own view the duties of a patriot were still unsatisfied. All the delights of youth, the energies of manhood, the tranquility of age, which had been successively devoted to his country, he considered but as the interest of a debt which time should not

limit nor even death itself annul—beyond the very confines of the grave, when sense should lose its faculty to discern, and action its power to perform, it was his wish to continue in usefulness to mankind—his contemplations, his reflections, (the very beggars privilege) were believed by WASHINGTON to be the property of his fellow-citizens—to his country he bequeathed them—were the inheritance divisible, and the whole world the inheritors, each man's portion of the gift, would be of more value than the wealth of Potosi, or the accumulated treasures of the Indies—it is a treasure lasting as virtue, and imperishable as his soul.

A FEW years only, my Brothers, have elapsed since, in this very metropolis, our eyes, now weeping at his death, have gazed with astonishment on this wonder, this prodigy of men. Never shall I forget the solemnity, the impressive solemnity, which his presence inspired. Age forgot its decrepitude—youth forsook its amusements, and flew together to behold, in reality, a being whom fame had hitherto presented, but as a picture to the imagination. (He has often spoken of it himself as the most affecting

scene of his life.) I have still in remembrance the awe, the love and veneration that crowded together on my mind. The gratitude of his countrymen was received with as much modesty, "as if he had been in the act of apology for his offences"—He could not speak, for sensibility had choaked expression; but his countenance addressed us in a language more than human, in a language, by the tongue, unutterable;—when he bowed, every heart that surrounded him, as if it had received the last salutation of a dying man, sunk in sorrow and dejection. At a time when joy should have rent the air with its acclamations, when every eye would have beamed with rapture, and every tongue spoken in the accents of gladness, the scene was silent and solemn, and seemed fearfully to portend the fast approaching event which we now commemorate.

I HAD read of triumphal entries, of conquerors in cars, all the splendour of Roman and Grecian celebrations, and the noisy shouts of a nation of parasites, were familiar to my conceptions; but never till then, had I a sentiment of any thing so sublime as the attitude of such virtue, in such a triumph.

BUT, my friends, the circumstances of his life, strange, surprising indeed, were not more remarkable than the scenes which have followed his death. More than five millions of people on our own continent, and if the tidings of death have flown on the rapid wing of his living fame, more than ten times five millions on other continents, are, at this moment lamenting the same melancholy event which we now solemnize. AMERICANS, though his nearest relations, have not a right to monopolize an exclusive alliance with WASHINGTON. He was a MAN, the best friend of man, and every thing wearing the form or feature of humanity, must feel a pride in being called his kinsman. *Vernon!* high and lofty as thou art, thou second *Ararat*, on which the Ark of American safety was lodged, every acre of our continent, as well as thy own proud hill, was rescued and protected by his arm, and has a right to contest thy boasted pre-eminence! *Virginia*, favoured spot of his nativity, he was not thine, thy sisters in the *North* and the *South*, claim a portion of his glory as their inheritance! *Columbia*, he was not thine, he was a descendant of *Adam*, and every son and daughter of *Adam*, may exult that he was

their *friend* and their *brother*. *Earth*, he was not thine, he was the offspring of virtue, the favourite of Heaven; to Heaven has he ascended—there is his *own*, his last, his eternal abode!!

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